

Appln. No. 09/753,352
Amendment dated DATE OF MAILING TO PTO
Reply to Office Action mailed February 24, 2003

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 through 21 remain in this application. No claims have been cancelled. No claims have been withdrawn. Claims 22 through 32 have been added.

The Examiner's rejections will be considered in the order of their occurrence in the Office Action.

Paragraphs 2 through 8 of the Office Action

Claims 1 through 7, 14 through 17 and 19 through 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,617,496 to Kingstone.

Claim 1, particularly as amended, requires a first fastener and a second fastener with the first fastener and the second fastener having substantially complementary shapes. This feature of the claimed invention, which is clearly evident from the drawing figures of the application, permits the first elongated object to be connected to more than one additional elongated objects (or other objects).

It is submitted that the Kingstone reference does not teach one of ordinary skill in the art the requirements of claim 1, especially the requirements set forth above. The Kingstone reference teaches an illuminated fiber optic cable device. In the most pertinent embodiment of the Kingstone disclosure, the cable 10 has an arcuate segment cutout 30 that extends into and along the length of the cable 10. The Kingstone cable 10 lacks, however, a combination of first and second fasteners that are complementary in shape to each other. Further, the mounting strip 35 of Kingstone includes a pair of tracks 39, 40 that are identical in configuration to each other, and thus the mounting strip does not disclose a combination

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of first and second fasteners that are complementary in shape to each other. Therefore it is submitted that the Kingstone reference cannot anticipate the requirements of claim 1, regardless of whether one chooses to consider the cable 10 or the mounting strip 35 of Kingstone to be an elongated object.

Further, it is submitted that the Kingstone reference would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the claimed invention, and is more likely to lead the skilled artisan away from the combination of requirements of applicant's claim 1. As noted above, the cable 10 of Kingstone includes only one mounting structure, and it is clear that any attempt to add additional mounting structures would only restrict or block the emanation of light from the fiber optic filaments of the cable and decrease the amount of illumination provided by the Kingstone cable device. While the mounting strip 35 of Kingstone includes two mounting structures, one of ordinary skill in the art is clearly taught that the mounting structures or tracks on the mounting strip should be identical in configuration, and each cable should be provided with cooperative mounting structures that are identical to each other for connecting to the mounting structures of the mounting strip. Thus, it is submitted that Kingstone leads one to employ only one type of mounting structure on the mounting strip and another type of mounting structure on each of the cables to be mounted on the mounting track.

Therefore, it is submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art, considering the teaching of the Kingstone reference, would not be led to the requirements of claim 1.

Additionally, claim 4 requires "wherein the first fastener comprises at least one male component integrated with the first one of the elongated objects" and claim 6, which depends from claim 4, requires "wherein the second fastener comprises at least one indented channel defined in the first one of the elongated objects". As noted above, the Kingstone reference clearly teaches cable having only one type of mounting structure, and a

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mounting strip with two mounting structures of identical configuration, and therefore it is submitted that Kingstone does not anticipate the requirements of "at least one male component" and "at least one female component" each integrated on an elongated object, as required by claim 6.

With respect to claim 8, which requires "wherein the first fastener comprises a longitudinally-extending void of material formed in the first elongated object and the second fastener comprises a longitudinally-extending protrusion of material from the first elongated object", it is clear that neither the cable 10 nor the mounting strip 35 of Kingstone teaches an elongated object that includes complementary first and second fasteners comprising a void of material and a protrusion of material.

It is therefore submitted that claim 1, as well as claims 2 through 7 and 14 through 17 and 19 through 21 which depend from claim 1, are in condition for allowance.

Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 1 through 7, 14 through 17 and 19 through 21 is therefore respectfully requested.

Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Office Action

Claims 1 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,900,126 to Jackson et al.

The requirements of claims 1 and 8 have been set forth above, and include first and second fasteners with complementary shapes on the first elongated object.

The Jackson reference teaches an array of transmission media that are bonded together by a bonding material. No element or object of Jackson has both first and second fasteners of complementary shape, or includes a longitudinally-extending void of material and a longitudinally-extending protrusion on the same element.

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Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 1 and 8 is therefore respectfully requested.

Paragraph 11 of the Office Action

Paragraph 11 of the Office Action states that claims 9 through 13 and 17 through 18 would be allowable if written into independent form with the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 9 has been written into independent form including the requirements of claim 1 (in its original form), and therefore claim 9, as well as claims 10 through 13 which depend from claim 9, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 17 has been written into independent form including the requirements of claims 1 and 16 (in their original form), and therefore claim 17, as well as claim 18 which depends from claim 17, are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Added claims

Added claims 22 through 17 recite additional requirements for the combination of claim 1. Specifically, claim 22 requires in part "a third fastener integrated with the first one of the elongated objects, the first fastener and the third fastener having substantially similar shapes". Also, claim 23 requires in part "a fourth fastener integrated with the first one of the elongated objects, the second fastener and the fourth fastener having substantially similar shapes". Further, claim 24 requires that "the first and third fasteners are at substantially diametrically opposite locations on the first one of the elongated objects and the second and fourth fasteners are at substantially diametrically opposite locations on the first one of the elongated objects". These features of the invention, clearly shown in many of the drawing figures of the present application, permit multiple elongate

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objects to be fastened to the first elongated object in a planar arrangement (as shown in Figures 3 and 4) or even a compact arrangement (as shown in Figures 5 and 6). These combinations of elements are clearly foreign to the Kingstone and Jackson disclosures, which do not permit the flexibility of configuration provided by the claimed invention.

Added claim 25 requires that "the first one of the elongated objects has a transverse cross section with a polygonal perimeter shape, each of the fasteners being located on a substantially planar face of the first one of the elongated objects". This feature of the present invention, shown in Figure 6, permits the close packing of fastened elongate objects together in a bundle, and resists movement of the elongate objects with respect to each other in a manner which might damage the fasteners. Neither Kingstone nor Jackson teach this feature.

Added claim 26 requires that "the first fastener and the second fastener are integrated with the first one of the elongated objects at substantially opposite locations on the first one of the elongated objects". This relationship between the first and second fasteners, shown in Figure 6 of the present invention, permits flexibility in the position of fastening elongate elements together, especially in forming a substantially planar arrangement of the elongate objects. Clearly this arrangement is foreign to the disclosures of the Kingstone and Jackson patents.

Added claim 27 requires that "the first fastener comprises a raised bead and the second fastener comprises an indented channel, and each of the first and second fasteners has a plurality of fingers formed thereon". This feature of the invention, shown in Figure 8 and described on page 8 of the specification, provides a further configuration for the fasteners that may require the application of less force to engage and disengage the fasteners of elongated objects.

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Added independent claim 28 requires "a first elongated object having a length, the first elongated object comprising at least one conductor and a sheath surrounding the at least one conductor", "a first fastener component formed on the sheath and extending for a distance along the length of the first elongated object", and "a second fastener component formed on the sheath and extending for a distance along the length of the first elongated object". This combination of elements, shown in Figures 1 et seq. and described on page 4 of the specification, is not shown in either the Kingstone or Jackson patents.

Added claims 29 through 32 recite further requirements for the combination of features set forth in claim 28. Claim 29 requires that "the first fastener component and the second fastener component have substantially complementary shapes", claim 30 requires "the first fastener component is a male component and the second fastener component is a female component", claim 31 requires "the first fastener component and the second fastener component are at substantially diametrically opposite locations on the first elongated object", which are features and relationships discussed previously with respect to other claims. Further, claim 32 recites a detailed combination of features and relationships that are not shown or suggested by the Kingstone and Jackson references.


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CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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